

P.O. Box 1053.  
Rangoon, Burma. 23rd January, 1951

Dear Kathleen: It was only yesterday morning I was wondering whether my letter had reached you, and presto in the afternoon came yours of Jan. 14. I fear very much that all and everything addressed to me to Washington will have miscarried, for the post there is, well as bad as it is here! And that is saying something. I have never lost more letters in my life than in Washington. Well now, it is very pleasant to hear that you "four" are all well and flourishing, - though I suppose deep in snow and ice, - and oh, how happy I am not to be snowed in. Really, for the winter there is nowhere I have ever struck as marvellous as Burma. It is warm but not enervating. Simply heavenly, swimming and moonlight picnics etc.

Well, frankly, I think I had best to the welfare of our mutually beloved  
L.B.

Would you please advise me, WHAT is the sensible thing to do with him, - and how to go about it, - and when.

It is the last thing that I want to part with, that I have of Charles himself, as it were, but like you, I realize a parting is inevitable for the sake of L.B. A suitable master must be found, some one who will take care of it, and value it. Human beings being what they are, I suppose that the best insurance for it is that it be sold and paid for in hard cash, and doubtless for L.B.'s sake as well as my own, the harder the better.

Charles warned me of the ghastly fate of the Straß given to various institutions.

Tell me, what will you do about Joseph, \* a horrid question to ask, but if you would but tell me, it might give me some ideas.

Just a dream, but I would love it to remain in Canada and somehow or another be known as the Laura Straß, - for Charles. Say for instance the C.B.C. wanted it, - well I could be sweet reasonableness if that condition were satisfied, though I must add that my reason is not priceless, as you can imagine from the second preceding par.

Do please consider, and advise. What concerns me most is the life of the fiddle itself, and how it may be most wisely prolonged and give the most pleasure at its sweet command. If only the Can.B.C. could be interested, - this is just a thought, - maybe we could achieve a bargain like this, that they pay a very reasonable purchasing price now on condition that it should remain with you for life and they be able to use it ~~for~~ so many times a year, and be known as the Laura Straß.

Will you find time in your busy life to write to me again?

And now, for a few words on the delights here, since I know just how you feel, - one does get hungry for the outside world after a long sojourn in Canada. Tomorrow being full moon, I hope to go this evening to the Shwe Dagon, about six o'clock. I haven't been yet, but the entrance is beguiling, a long long wide climb by shallow flights of stairs beneath a wide colonnade set with the gayest of stalls of offerings, flowers, and folded papers, incense, and I expect images. One goes barefoot, and that is an ordeal, for it isn't too clean and various chickens and birds and beggars live there, - and as you know none of these creatures is tidy. Siamese temples were spotless, and quite exquisite in a coloured glass diamond fashion. One was covered on the outside with symmetrically smashed Chinese plates and saucers, pinks and blues and greens set in a pattern. There is a pte or festival with a fair and theatricals on tonight too, and last night passing by I glimpsed it, and made up my mind that I must go there too. It did look so very pretty, shadows and lights and stalls, balloons and food and feather dusters, and in the background the incessant chatter and weird cries and orchestra.



Because of what we politely call the confused political situation, my plans for the summer still hang fire, although I am striving to find a reasonable and not too expensive fashion of filling in April May and June. Burma is sterling area, so is India, but sightseeing at 115-120 is a little too strenuous even for this lover of warm weather. So, it means hill stations if Kashmir blows up, and I am making a try to go to Java and Bali, - I have not seen either, - by returning via the Silver Line, Dutch freighters from Calcutta to San Francisco. The great advantage would be that I would not have to return to the West Coast across the continent in midsummer, - something I fault. Mr. and Mrs. U.S.A. on the road are strenuous, and they have so many children so to speak!

What are you going to do with yourself this summer, - now tell me, as I hope to have a furnished house at Palo Alto in from September to June '52, would there be any chance of you and mother coming for say Christmas, or for a nice break in the winter? Don't you think you could possibly manage it, - you would have no expenses with me, and may be we could fix up a concert or two in S.F.. Everyone needs a change some time, and you seem to have been cooped up long enough in Toronto. Won't you think of it, - do, - and favourably!

Rangoon is fearfully expensive in some ways, flour Australian 11.8 annas a lb! or thirty cents. Everything is expensive, sugar the same. Only the rent is possible, but not cheap, and of course the servants are not expensive either. I have four - and am enjoying being a "lady" again. Ye Gods yes, - but also, oh, ye gods! are they limited in intelligence. I have a small English car which has cured me of ever wanting another, and I had been hankering for one. No, ye good old U.S. variety, even if they do look more like houses than a means of locomotion. Again, all the best, and I hope you will be kind and give me your thoughts. Affectionately, *Wella Laura*

First fold here

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AIR LETTER  
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